Information for teachers

Positive, student-led solutions can play an important part of schools’ strategies to counter bullying. Involving students in preventing and countering bullying makes sense, since they are in the ‘front line’. Actively and authentically engaging with students can provide schools with new insights into the challenging issue of bullying at school.

Perspectives on bullying involves senior students sharing what they have learned through their school experience, and investigating students’ views related to the creation of a safe and supportive school community where bullying and violence are not tolerated.

Purpose

Perspectives on bullying uses inquiry learning and the sharing of students’ own positive solutions to bullying. It will engage senior students in:

- acting as leaders and change-makers in their school
- exploring issues of social justice, their school environment, tolerance and diversity
- expressing their views, being critical thinkers and developing citizenship skills.

In this activity students have the opportunity to:

- share ideas between students of different age levels
- provide insight into students’ views about dealing with bullying for the school
- take a positive approach to fostering a school community where everyone feels safe and supported
- promote behaviour change in younger students.

The activities and estimated duration

Perspectives on bullying provides two options (outlined below) that involve investigating students’ perspectives on bullying. Students create a presentation or brief report of the findings, and can share these findings with other members of the school community. A suitable time could be the annual National Day of Action.

The duration will depend on the activity chosen and the level of student engagement; additional time out of class may be required for students to develop presentations. The personal reflection activity will take less time than the survey.

Option 1. What I would tell my Year 7 self: a personal reflection exercise and presentation to share senior students’ own perspective with other students. (Use Handout Activity 1)

- Teacher introduces activity (5-10 minutes).
- In class students reflect and discuss their experiences (40-50 minutes).
- In or out of class time to prepare a presentation; duration will depend on the format.
- Presentation to other students (if a verbal presentation limit to 3-5 minutes).
Option 2. Students’ views on bullying: a student survey and brief report to investigate the range of perspectives in the school community. [Use Handout Activity 2]

- Teacher introduces activity (5-10 minutes).
- In class preparation of the survey (20 minutes).
- Conduct the survey over the following week; students’ time commitment will depend on whether the survey is online or face-to-face.
- Collate, discuss and develop a brief presentation of the findings; the duration will depend on the format chosen (estimate 30 minutes).
- Presentation to other students (if verbal presentation, limit to 3-5 minutes).

Participants

Perspectives on bullying is designed for school students between the ages of 15 and 18 (Years 10 to 12). It may also be adapted for other students. It could be part of the students’ personal development lessons, pastoral care sessions or the school leadership program.

Preparation

Prior to the activity you can prepare by:

- Downloading the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence poster to display a copy in your room.
- Downloading the two activity handouts for students, add any other relevant details for your school to the handouts, and provide copies for students. For Activity 1, amend the title “What I would tell my Year 7 self” to the first year of high school in your state/territory.
- Reading the definition of bullying provided in the student handout, noting particularly if your school’s definition is different. (Note: this definition is from the National Safe Schools Framework.)
- Ensuring you are familiar with your school’s guidelines for dealing with bullying and with the reporting of harm or threat of harm by students; as the activity involves discussion about bullying, students may mention or report incidents or issues.

To start the activity:

- Discuss the reason for the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence, referring to the poster. All across Australia, school communities will ‘Take a Stand Together’ against bullying and violence.
- Introduce the activity using the information on the student handouts under the heading ‘Why talk about bullying?’ as a guide, including reference to the definition of bullying.
- Revisit your class protocols for collaborative learning.

Discouraging inappropriate personal disclosure

Highlight that the focus of the activity is about resolving issues and investigating helpful strategies and knowledge senior students can share with younger students. The emphasis needs to remain on making a positive difference in our school. Mention that younger students look up to senior students who can share what they have learnt to help make a safe and supportive school community for all.

The topic of bullying may be difficult for some students to discuss. However, speaking up about bullying and accessing help and support is very important for all students. Acknowledge to students
that bullying may be a sensitive topic to discuss and therefore respectful listening is particularly important. Reinforce that every student has the right to decide how much to share and whether to participate in the group discussion. Teachers should emphasise that this activity is not the place for students to share or resolve current personal issues related to bullying, and instead that students are encouraged to speak with the teacher or a school support person after the lesson.

Teachers should ensure they are familiar with the ‘protective interrupting’ process which aims to protect students from the consequences of revealing inappropriate personal information in front of other students. It is possible a student will begin to disclose personal information or a teacher might sense that a student is about to make such a disclosure. In such a situation, the teacher should acknowledge they have heard the student using words like ‘That sounds important,’ but stop them divulging any further details. The teacher should gently suggest the student talks privately with them after the lesson or, if possible, ask the student if they would like to leave the classroom then to continue the conversation.

If a student should make a disclosure of bullying currently occurring, your role is to listen calmly, show support for the student, acknowledge what they have told you and, once the student has finished, discuss with them what you could both do next. Ensure you are aware of your school’s policy for dealing with bullying.

National Safe Schools Framework

The National Safe Schools Framework provides a vision and a set of guiding principles for safe, supportive and respectful school communities that promote student wellbeing.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/PreventingBullying/Planning/Pages/National-Safe-Schools-Framework.aspx

Perspectives on bullying links with the following elements in particular:
- Element 2: A supportive and connected school culture
- Element 6: Engagement, skill development and safe school curriculum
- Element 7: A focus on student wellbeing and student ownership.

About the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA) occurs on the third Friday in March each year. The NDA is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and the whole community to take a stand together against bullying and violence. This annual day provides a focus for schools who want to say, ‘Bullying. No Way!’ and to strengthen their everyday messages that bullying and violence at school are not okay at any time.

Schools can access additional information and downloadable resources for the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence at https://bullyingnoway.gov.au

The annual NDA is organised by all Australian education authorities through the national Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group. The NDA and Bullying. No Way! website are managed on behalf of all educational authorities by the Department of Education, Training and Employment in Queensland.
Feedback to Bullying. No Way!

Schools may wish to send their students’ findings and recommendations to Bullying. No Way! at bnw.website@det.qld.gov.au

A survey to evaluate the NDA campaign will be sent to all registered schools from the Bullying. No Way! team. Teachers will be invited to provide feedback on the Perspectives on Bullying activity as part of this survey. Teachers can also send feedback regarding how the activity was implemented and the ideas generated by students to Bullying. No Way! at bnw.website@det.qld.gov.au
Activity 1 – What I would tell my Year 7 self

Why talk about bullying?

The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence is held on the third Friday in March each year. This day is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and the whole community to take a stand together against bullying and violence. This activity is part of the work being done across Australia to ‘take a stand together’ on the National Day of Action.

As senior students, you can share your insights and what you’ve learnt with younger students to help make a safe and supportive school community for all. Younger students will listen to your ideas and advice, and hearing from students about their perspectives on bullying is important for the whole school.

Some key facts about bullying

Bullying is something we hear about often both at school and in the workplace. However, people can hold quite diverse views on what bullying actually is. The national definition of bullying agreed to by all state and territory departments is provided in this handout.

Bullying has negative impacts for students who are bullied, those who do the bullying and the students who witness it. Involving students in the school’s anti-bullying strategies is an important part of the solution.

Australian research shows that bullying peaks during the years of transition to high school and early high school, and then tends to decline in senior school.

Some students are more likely to be bullied – those who stand out as different, those with a disability and those who react more strongly to teasing. Some students are also more likely to bully others.

Bullying is serious: even what appears to be ‘mild’ bullying can have a devastating impact on students if they don’t feel safe coming to school and are not able to focus on learning and having fun with friends.

Steps for the activity

This activity involves you working in small groups to prepare a short presentation suitable for students in their first year of high school. Presentations can relate to the experience of being bullied, bullying others or witnessing bullying. The activity is designed to be completed in small groups, although it may be done by students individually if you prefer.

The aim of your presentation is to help younger students to build skills and strategies for dealing with bullying.

1. Determine groups and roles
   Establish small groups and decide the various roles of students – group facilitator (who will make sure everyone contributes), scribe, spokesperson, etc.
2. **Brain storm and discuss**
Take yourself back into ‘a younger you’ – when you were starting your first year of high school.

**Discuss** your thoughts about the following questions. **Write or create a mind map** of your ideas and thoughts about:

- What did you feel confident about when starting high school?
- How did you feel about fitting in?
- What were you worried about?
- Where did you get support?
- Did you experience situations where some students had ‘social power’ over others? What was the basis for having more social power (e.g. social status, learning abilities, physical strength, etc.)? How did this play out in the classroom and in situations?
- What were the attitudes amongst the students back then about appropriate ways to get on with others and about bullying?
- How is it different now that you are a senior student?

**Discuss** your thoughts and experiences related to bullying in early high school which might include being bullied, seeing bullying happening to others, bullying others:

- What situations did you face or witness?
- What options did you have, how did you weigh these up and how did you decide what to do?
- How did it turn out?
- What might you have done differently with what you know now as a senior student?

Using your notes, decide on some key points to include in a short presentation for a ‘Younger you’. Focus particularly on things you wish you had known at the beginning of high school.

3. **Create your presentation** (spoken max 3 minutes, written max 200 words)
Options for your presentation include:

- A spoken presentation on assembly, ‘What I would tell my Year 7 self’
- Short magazine article, ‘Ten things I wish I’d known’
- Advice column, ‘Just starting high school?’
- A collage representing the key messages
- A ‘Dear me’, ‘Dear Yr 7’ or ‘Dear 11/12’ personal letter.

Provide specific advice or comments around the issue, and focus on positive resolution. Share relevant feelings about experiences that students may also experience. Frame your advice as suggestions that are suitable for younger students, including where to go for help.

**Personal Reflection**

At the end of the activity, you may like to reflect on the following questions.

- Did you learn anything new about yourself (or your classmates) in this activity?
- From your initial ideas, how did you select what advice to include in your presentation?
- What was the most important message you wanted to give to your Year 7 self?
- If you worked in groups, how did the group collaboration impact on your eventual presentation?
Definition of bullying

The national definition of bullying for schools, developed by educators across Australia as part of the National Safe Schools Framework, is:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Online bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, e.g. the internet or mobile devices.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

In short, bullying is an ongoing misuse of power involving a pattern of harmful verbal, physical or social behaviour.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying
**Activity 2 – Students’ views on bullying**

**Why talk about bullying?**

The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and the whole community to take a stand together against bullying and violence.

Bullying is an area where there are lots of different, and sometimes conflicting, ideas. People can have different ideas about what ‘bullying’ actually is. People also have different opinions about how serious bullying is and what needs to be done about it. Cutting through the myths and misconceptions about bullying can be challenging.

This activity asks students what they think about a number of ‘statements’ which may or may not be true about bullying. As senior students, you can talk to younger students to find out their views which will give the school a better understanding of the perspectives of students.

**Some key facts about bullying**

Bullying is something we hear about often both at school and in the workplace. However, people can hold quite diverse views on what bullying actually is. The definition of bullying agreed to by all state and territory departments is provided in this handout.

Bullying is something that impacts on lots of people. Bullying has negative impacts for students who are bullied, those who do the bullying and the students who witness it. While we agree we don’t want people to experience bullying, it can be challenging for schools to deal with it.

There are a number of factors that can impact on schools ensuring a safe and supportive school community where bullying and violence are not tolerated, including:

- Children and young people can view bullying differently from adults.
- Bullying can often occur in places or ways that are hidden from adults’ view.
- The underlying causes of bullying may be prejudicial attitudes that may not be discussed.
- Factors outside of school, including at home, in the community and in the wider society may have a big impact.
- While we know some important facts from research, numerous ‘generalisations’ or ‘assumptions’ about bullying persist that do not match with what research actually shows.

All of these issues mean that discussing bullying is very important. Research shows that the most effective approaches to bullying involve everyone in the school community. Hearing directly from students about their views on bullying can be a valuable part of a school’s approach to creating a safe and supportive school environment for all.

**Steps for the activity**

This activity involves you working in small groups to run a survey to students in your school and collate the findings into a short report or presentation. The survey uses statements that come from research, popular culture and the media.
The aim of your activity is to provide helpful information for other students (and for teachers) on a number of generalisations about bullying that may or may not be valid, and to develop a better understanding of bullying that includes students’ perspectives on bullying.

1. **Determine groups and roles**
   Establish small groups and decide the various roles of students – group facilitator (who will make sure everyone contributes), scribe, spokesperson, etc.

2. **Create your survey**
   **Read** the list of generalisations on the page called **Statements**. It has been developed specifically for use in your survey. **Select up to 10 statements from the list.**

   To ensure your findings are a good representation of what students across the school really think, plan to survey a range of students – **read** the important information in the **Guidelines for conducting surveys.**

   **Decide** how you will run your survey and then **create your survey.** Consider whether you will get better answers if you collect them through an anonymous process or in person. Options include:
   - In person with individuals or through focus groups – make copies of your survey page.
   - Leave the survey forms in a central location and advertise it to students – add the personal questions and other text mentioned in the **Guidelines for conducting surveys** and make copies.
   - Online – **Survey Monkey**® [https://www.surveymonkey.com/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/) is a useful tool for online surveys. It is easy and free to register a basic account to set up your survey, and you can generate a link to give to students (e.g. let them know via your school newsletter). With the basic account you can ask up to 10 questions. Students’ agree/disagree responses to all 10 statements can be included within a single question using the question type: Matrix of choices (one answer per row), allowing you to add questions for personal information. The survey tool collates and graphs the responses.

3. **Run your survey**
   Allow time for students to complete the survey:
   - For an online survey, about a week would be enough time for those who wish to take part to do so. Online survey tools will graph your results for you.
   - For a survey run in person (with individuals or focus groups), you will talk with students in the break times. Depending on the number of participating students, you may need multiple sessions. You will need to allow time to manually collate all the responses.
   - For a survey using forms left for students to complete, about a week should be sufficient. You will need to allow time to manually collate all the responses.

4. **Collate and discuss the findings and create your presentation**
   **Collate** the findings and graph the results. **Write up** the findings for presentation. Consider:
   - Two or three key findings you want to highlight.
   - Any issues in getting a representative sample of students. Whose voices may not have been heard?
   - How you will share the results. Some options are:
     - Visual or spoken presentation on assembly
     - Web page Bullying Myth Busters for your school site
Brief report of findings and what this means for our school
• Discussion with school staff and/or student groups.
  • Whether you will suggest follow-up activities that you could do based on the findings.

5. **Present** your findings

**Personal Reflection**

At the end of the activity, you may like to reflect on the following questions.
• Did you learn anything new about yourself (or your classmates) in this activity?
• From your findings, how did you select what to highlight in your presentation?
• Were there any unexpected findings in your survey?
**Definition of bullying**

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**Guidelines for conducting surveys**

**Planning for a representative sample of students to survey**

Before you run your survey, you need to think about:

- Surveying a reasonable number of students given the school’s size in order to get a realistic idea of the range of views.
- How to avoid individual students completing the survey more than once.
- How to collect surveys from a sample that represents students from across the school.
- Whether more valid information can be collected through an anonymous process (such as an online survey) or in person (such as interviews or focus groups).

Your sample of students should match the features of your overall school enrolment. For example, if your school enrolment is 1000 students, in a mixed-sex school which features about 30% Indigenous students, you need to ensure you survey:

- About 10% or 100 students (25% would be ideal, but may be too time consuming).
- Students from across each Year level (roughly 15-20 from each Year level).
- Approximately 50 boys and 50 girls.
- At least 30 students with an Indigenous background.
- Any other important identifying information.

Therefore in your survey, you need to ask students some personal questions (demographic information). Keep these questions to a minimum, and only what you really need to know. **Do not collect names or information that would identify individuals.**

Some students may not wish to participate in the survey, which is their choice. Sometimes it is not possible to get a truly representative sample. In this case, you could mention this in your presentation.

**What to say to students when you run the survey**

Whether you run the surveys in person or create an online survey, before students decide to take part they need to be told:

- What you are investigating and why, e.g. use the rationale in this handout.
- What the national/school definition of bullying is.
- What to expect in the survey, e.g. **There are 10 statements for you to think about. Tick the box that indicates how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.**
- That their name will not be collected or used in your final presentation of findings.
- The reason you are collecting some personal details from the students, e.g. **We need to ask you for some personal information so we can be sure the survey findings provide a valid picture of what all students think about these statements about bullying.**

At the end of the survey thank participants and let them know when/where they can see the findings.
### Statements

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<tr>
<th>WHEN PLANNING THE SURVEY SELECT NO MORE THAN 10 FROM THIS LIST</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<td>1. Getting bullied is a natural part of growing up; it’s character building.</td>
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<td>2. Cyberbullying is about getting a reaction, not about hurting people.</td>
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<td>3. What teachers call bullying is different from what students call bullying.</td>
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<td>4. The emotional impact of bullying is much worse than the physical impact.</td>
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<td>5. Whether bullying happens to a student depends on how well they fit into the social norms for that particular student group.</td>
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<td>6. People who bully others have low self-esteem and are rejected by other people.</td>
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<td>7. Once a ‘victim’ of bullying, always a victim.</td>
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<td>8. Boys mainly use physical bullying and girls mainly use social/relational bullying.</td>
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<td>9. Threats of suspension or exclusion will make students who bully others stop.</td>
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<td>10. The types of bullying that students do and experience varies with age.</td>
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<td>11. There are lots of support services for students who have been bullied or who think they might themselves be bullying other students.</td>
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<td>12. If you get bullied online, the best option is to bully the other person back.</td>
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<td>13. A diverse student group is more interesting and better for learning about life than a group where everyone is the same.</td>
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<td>14. There’s no point in students challenging other students who frequently use name-calling, racist or sexist slurs and personal insults.</td>
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<td>15. Students who bully other students often claim it’s a joke and that their ‘victim’ needs to just deal with it.</td>
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